

Opposing the Spanish Match: Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* (1620)

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ABSTRACT

The beginning of negotiations in 1614 for a dynastic marriage between Prince Charles and the Infanta Maria of Spain caused great concern among English people who still held strong anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish prejudices. King James's decision in 1618 to use the marriage negotiations in order to mediate in the confessional conflict in Europe added to this concern. England was then politically divided between those willing to help James's son-in-law, Frederick, who had accepted the Bohemian crown following the rebellion of the Protestant estates against the Habsburg King Ferdinand, and those who supported the Stuart monarch's decision to keep England safe from continental struggles.

Despite the censorship of the state, a group of writers began a campaign against the Spanish Match which had a great influence on public opinion. Among the most prominent of these was Thomas Scott, whose first work, *Vox Populi* (1620), became one of the most controversial political tracts of the period. This article analyses Scott's pamphlet and considers how he also made use of the discourse against Catholicism and Spain to introduce further commentaries on the monarchical system and the citizens' right to participate in government.

KEYWORDS: Spanish Match, anti-Catholicism, anti-Spanish discourse, pamphlet literature, civic government.

1. Introduction

The Spanish Match became an important focus of study for a number of scholars in the late 1970s and 1980s, when the role the marriage negotiations played in James I's foreign and religious

policy began to receive attention (Albert L. Loomie, Johann P. Sommerville, Peter Lake and Richard Cust, among others). However, many of these studies centred on James's problems with the English Parliament and the religious controversy the Match generated, often depicting both powers, Catholic Spain and Protestant England, as mutually exclusive opposites. This view has been challenged in the last few years by historians such as Glyn Redworth, Fernando B. Benito, Alexander Samson and Robert Cross, who have reconsidered the reasons for the failure of the negotiations and, especially in Redworth's case, explored the cultural, political, intellectual and commercial elements that influenced the final outcome of the Match project.

The series of pamphlets written by the Puritan divine Thomas Scott against the Spanish Match in the early 1620s have been frequently examined since the 1980s, but, while early scholarship on the subject emphasized Scott's religious commitment as the main reason for his propaganda campaign against the Match (Cust 1986; Heinemann 1982: 151-172; Lake 1982), more recent studies have underlined other aspects which had passed unnoticed before, such as Scott's humanist ideas regarding civic government (Colclough 2005: 102-119; Peltonen 1995: 229-270). However, in both cases, these pamphlets have been considered as a group and, as far as I know, an analysis of each tract in itself has never been made.

The present article departs from this general tendency and focuses on Scott's *Vox Populi* as a single piece independent of the author's other writings –although some references are made to other texts by Scott and other writers who participated in the discursive network which aimed to promote a change in royal policy. There are several reasons for this. On the one hand, *Vox Populi* was the first step in the propaganda campaign the author developed against the marriage project; its popularity and wide reception among different social and political groups in England justify the need for a closer analysis of the work and the strategies employed by the pamphleteer to appeal to such a diverse audience. On the other, the fact that the pamphlet seemed to represent a threat to James I has been identified as one of the reasons why the monarch increased the censorship on works discussing his views on religion and politics. Moreover, it introduces some implicit references to the subjects' duty to the

commonwealth, demonstrating the author's classical humanist view on government, which has not yet been fully explored.

A brief summary of the historical and political background, as well as a brief account of pamphlet and news production in late Jacobean England, has been included in section II in order to place Scott's work in context. Section III considers some aspects of the writer's life and career and focuses on the controversy generated by the printing of *Vox Populi*. It also includes a textual analysis of the pamphlet essential to understanding its controversial nature.

2. The Spanish Match and the Palatinate crisis: The news boom and pamphlet literature in late Jacobean England

James's foreign policy was heavily influenced by the increasing territorial, political and religious divisions in Europe in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Far from pursuing a warlike policy which would involve England in these conflicts, James tried to keep a balance and protect the nation from continental struggle. Thus, in 1613 he entered a defensive alliance with the Evangelical Union and married his daughter Elizabeth to Frederick V, Elector Palatine and leader of the German Protestants (Adams 1983: 94-95).

In addition, the English monarch tried to maintain peaceful relations with Spain and welcomed Don Diego de Sarmiento y Acuña, Count of Gondomar, as the new Spanish ambassador in London. During his first embassy (1612-1618), Gondomar tried to dissuade James from any intervention in Europe and, to a lesser degree, assist the English Catholic community. In 1614, after James's dissolution of the so called "Addled Parliament", in which its members refused to grant the monarch any further subsidy, Gondomar proposed a Spanish Match as a means of solving the English king's economic problems. These measures did not contribute to the Spanish diplomat's popularity and he soon became the focus of the physical and verbal attacks from many English Protestants, especially during his second embassy, from 1620 to 1622 (Benito 2005: 75-77; Loomie 1973: vol. II, xvii-xix, 33, 106-110; Redworth 2003: 14-15; Tobíos 1987: 105-137, 184-240).

Such tensions had increased in 1618 when the Bohemian crisis began. James's son-in-law had accepted the crown that the

Bohemians had offered to him after rebelling against the Habsburg King Ferdinand. Soon afterwards, the Catholic League, led by Spain, occupied Frederick's lands in Bohemia and the Palatinate. Frederick and Elizabeth were exiled and thus became the perfect victimized heroes in the minds of many English Protestants, who considered that James should support the Palatine cause and abandon his diplomatic relations with the Spanish power.

The growing English public interest in the Palatinate crisis gave rise to an unprecedented news boom. Printed news and pamphlets became the main source of information about continental affairs, as they could reach a large and heterogeneous range of readers thanks to their small format and low prices (Halasz 1997: 11). However, despite the fact that printing presses specialized in publishing works on international matters, the number of printed copies they could produce was not high and many readers –mainly those not directly involved in politics or belonging to lower social groups– were sometimes unable to buy the texts. In such cases, oral transmission helped spread the contents of these writings. In fact, it was common to find groups of people hearing and debating the latest news around St. Paul's, while reading aloud also became a frequent and useful means of disseminating information (Baron 2001: 50-51; Cogswell 1989: 22-25). According to Joad Raymond, pamphlets then became “part of the everyday practice of politics, the primary means of creating public opinion” (26).

Clearly, King James was anxious about this popular debate on his foreign policy and considered this exchange of news and reading practices a direct offence against his prerogative and a threat to his diplomatic relations with Spain. This explains the repressive campaign against works which discussed religion and politics. Thus, “A Proclamation against Excesse of Lauish and Licentious Speech of Matters of State”, issued on 24 December 1620, promised to punish not only those who “did intermeddle by pen or speech with causes of state, and secrets of government, either at home or abroad” but also those who gave “attention, or any manner of applause, or entertainment to such discourse, without acquainting some of Our Privie Counsell, or other principall officers therewithal, respective to the place where such speeches should be used” (Larkin and Hughes 1973: 519-521). However, the English sovereign's attempts to silence these critical voices were not completely successful, as books could

still be published illegally with no licence or without being registered, and many controversial printed works on current political affairs were often copied down by professional scribes hired by booksellers –since scribal texts were not affected by the restrictions on printing (Clegg 2001: 60, 185-187). In short, James’s efforts to rule English public opinion were unsuccessful.

3. Thomas Scott’s *Vox Populi*: printing, reception and textual analysis

Little is known about Thomas Scott’s life before the 1620s. In 1616 he was listed as one of James I’s chaplains, and he had important connections at court, especially after offering his services to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and leader of the anti-Spanish faction.¹ In 1620 he enrolled at St. Andrews University after obtaining a degree in Divinity from the University of Cambridge; later that year he would work as rector of St. Saviour’s in Norwich (Kelsey 2004; Wright 1943: 150-154).

Scott wrote over twenty-five tracts from 1620 to 1625, thus becoming one of the most prolific pamphleteers of the time. He portrayed himself as a spokesman of English Protestantism and tended to moderate or even silence his Presbyterian sympathies in order to promote a united front against the Catholic enemy (Lake 1982: 808). Scott reproduced anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish prejudices common in England since the mid-sixteenth century and in general tried to encourage action against Spain.²

His first and possibly most controversial work was *Vox Populi, or Newes from Spayne*, first published in London around mid-November

¹ According to Thomas Cogswell, this faction was formed by a loose coalition of “patriots”, led by Southampton, Pembroke and George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, set on a war on behalf of the Palatine exiles, Elizabeth and Frederick of Bohemia (1). They were highly critical of James’s policy in the Netherlands and the Palatinate and fiercely opposed the Spanish Match.

² Anti-Spanish prejudices had been commonplace in anti-Catholic discourse from Mary Tudor’s reign. However, it was in the 1580s, when the threat of a Spanish invasion was evident, that both discourses were combined. In the Jacobean period, detractors of the Spanish Match would constantly appeal to the link between them, while supporters of James’s foreign policy tried to expose their artificial nature and to disassociate one from the other.

1620. The pamphlet, printed anonymously, caused considerable anxiety, mainly to King James, who believed it could seriously damage his diplomatic relations with Spain, as Simonds D'Ewes described in his diary: "[...] the king himself, hoping to get the Prince Elector, his son-in-law, to be restored to the Palatinate by an amicable treaty, was much incensed at the sight of it [*Vox Populi*], as being published at an unseasonable time, though otherwise it seemed to proceed from an honest English heart" (Halliwell 1845: 158-160). Indeed, Cyndia Clegg has suggested that the "Proclamation against Licentious Speech in Matters of State" issued in December 1620 might have been partly provoked by James's embarrassment at the publication of Scott's text (186). On the arrest of Scott's printer, the tract's authorship became known, but the pamphleteer was able to escape to the Low Countries, where he stayed until the controversy over the book subsided.³ According to Louis B. Wright,

Since Scott's ideas on the Spanish policy were similar to the views of his patron, the Earl of Pembroke, and exactly coincided with the anti-Spanish sentiments of George Abbot, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and reflected the beliefs of practically every English Protestant, not much zeal to prevent the author's escape to Holland was displayed. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that he was aided, not only to escape but to continue a campaign of pamphleteering.⁴ (153)

As a consequence, *Vox Populi* became one of the most controversial works in late Jacobean England. It was probably composed in 1619, in the early years of the German war, soon after the Count of Gondomar returned to Spain. It had already circulated in manuscript format before, and again even after it was printed in 1620;⁵ nine editions of the printed version came out in Holland and

³ He came back to England soon afterwards and was able to continue with his ecclesiastical duties there. Only in 1623, when he went to Utrecht as chaplain to the English garrison, did he move permanently to the Low Countries. He was assassinated in 1626 by an English soldier who, in spite of the prejudices of the time, confessed that he was neither a Catholic nor an agent of Spain (Kelsey 2004: 4; Wright 1943: 153-154).

⁴ In fact, Lake considers the pamphleteer to have been "an agent of a Palatinate connection embracing Abbot, Elizabeth of Bohemia, Maurice of Nassau and Sir Horace Vere among others" (813-814).

⁵ Folger Ms Va.402, compiled in the 1620s by Brian Cave, includes a transcript of *Vox Populi* (fols. 32r-56r), together with other texts dealing with England's international

London (Baron 2001: 43).⁶ It was largely distributed abroad –there was a French version in 1621 entitled *Voix du Peuple*– and it was reprinted in 1624 following Prince Charles’s return from Madrid (when a second part was added), and in subsequent years, for instance, in 1659 and 1679, when it was given different titles.⁷ The range of its popularity explains the fact that other authors appropriated its title to promote their own works.⁸

Scott’s tract purports to give a true account of the Spanish Council of State’s meeting following the Count of Gondomar’s arrival from England in 1618. The detailed information provided at the beginning of the pamphlet about the place, members and reasons for the calling of the Council ‘authenticates’ the text and presents this fictional account as a reliable report of Spanish state policies. The reader is not offered the pamphleteer’s explicit opinion but a series of bare facts from which he or she may infer his or her own conclusions. By such means Scott not only creates an illusion of reality but also shows his conviction regarding the verisimilitude of the events, which are thus portrayed in order to elicit a response from the reader. The dramatic presentation of the characters,⁹ who voice their different arguments in the form of dialogue and sometimes even differ in their views on Anglo-Spanish diplomacy, also contributes to the impression that the text is reliable.

policy, especially in relation to Spain. Ms Rawlinson B.151, compiled by Robert Horn (1565-1640) and now in the Bodleian library, also contains a copy of *Vox Populi* (fols. 19v-30r). On these manuscript collections, see Colclough (2005: 212-224) and Love (1998: 75, 96-97).

⁶ *Vox Populi* was included in two collections of works by Thomas Scott published in Holland in 1624: *Vox Populi. Vox Dei. Vox Regis. Digitus Dei. The Belgick Pismir. The Tongue Combat. Symmachia. The High Wayes of God and the King. The Proiecter; and The Workes of the Most Famous and Reuerend Diuine Mr Thomas Scot.*

⁷ Scott, *A Choice Narrative of Count Gondomar’s Transactions* (London, 1659) and *A Narrative of the Wicked Plots Carried on by Seignior Gondamore* (London, 1679).

⁸ See for example Samuel Harnar, *Vox Populi, or, Glostersheres Desire* (London, 1642) and the anonymous *Vox Populi, or, the People’s Humble Discovery* (London, 1642). On the different reprints and appropriations of Scott’s work, see Raymond (2003: 125) and Wright (1943: 160).

⁹ Among them, the Count of Gondomar, the Duke of Lerma, and the Pope’s nuncio, “together with the presidents of the Councell of Castile, of Arragon, of Italy, of Portugall, of the Indies, of the Treasure, of Warre, and especially of the holy Inquisition” (A2r).

The presence of the Pope's nuncio and the Council's willingness to satisfy him regarding the current state of Spanish affairs in England implies collaboration between Spain and the Holy See, and Spain's readiness to further the Pope's plans. Hence, Gondomar's mission is described as a scheme devised by the Church of Rome to spread Catholicism on the continent. However, the references to the internal rivalries of the counsellors and Lerma,¹⁰ and the nuncio's competition for preference, reveal their disharmony and ironically point out their taste for pomp and solemnity as a vain and empty façade:

But at length the Nuntio (supposing all the Counsel set) launched forth and came to roade in the Counsel chamber, where (after mutuall discharge of duetie from the company and blessing upon it from him) he sate downe in solemne silence, grieved at his oversight, when he saw the Duke of Lerma absent with whom he stroue as a competitor for pompe and Glorie. (A2v)¹¹

It is only when their respective interests are at risk that Lerma and the papal representative agree to cooperate, thus admitting the need felt by both Spain and Rome for mutual help in reaching their main goals: Universal Monarchy and a Universal Church. As Lerma indicates,

All our peace, our warre, our treaties, marriages, and whatsoever intendment else of ours, aimes at this principall end, to get the whole possession of the world, and to reduce all to unite under one temporall head, that our King may truly be what he is stiled, the catholick and universal King. As faith is therefore universal & the Church universal, yet so as it is under one head the Pope, whose seate is & must necessarily be at Rome where S. Peter sate: so must all men be subiect to our and their Catholique King, whose particular seate is here in Spayne, his uniuersall euary where. (A4r)

Lerma's justification of any means serving to achieve their ends points to his Machiavellian concept of policy and stresses the danger of trusting the Spanish. In this way, Spain's imperialist and colonial

¹⁰ Francisco de Sandoval (1553-1625), Duke of Lerma from 1599 and Chief Minister of Philip III of Spain from 1598 to 1618, when he fell into disrepute. That year he was created cardinal and retired to Lerma, where he died in 1625.

¹¹ Nonetheless, this depiction was highly conventional as it had largely been developed in numerous Elizabethan pamphlets and plays in which Spaniards' seriousness and solemnity were ridiculed, often interpreted as ways of covering up their weakness and hypocrisy.

ambitions are satisfied by the Pope, who authorizes and supports them as long as they contribute to the spread of Catholicism. Hence, the nuncio's triple identity, as papal representative, Spaniard and Jesuit, personifies the three-headed monster against which European and English Protestants were supposed to fight. The nuncio, like any other Jesuit, is deprived of any national identity and is purely seen as an agent of Spain (A4v, C4r).

After Lerma's opening, the meeting focuses on its main concerns: Gondomar's embassy and his actions to further the cause of Spain and Catholicism in the British Isles. So, Scott expresses –through Gondomar's voice– his reservations about the Jacobean court and the English recusants, who are depicted as corrupt and naturally evil people trying to benefit from England's weakness. Both groups are shown as the main promoters of the Spanish Match out of ambition or necessity:

Two sorts of people unmeasurably desired the match might proceed. First the begging and beggarly Courtiers, that they might have to furnish their wants. Secondly the Romish Catholiques, who hoped hereby at least for a moderation of synes and lawes, perhaps a tolleracion, and perhaps a total restauracion of their religion in England. (B2r)

Here Scott implicitly reminds his readers of their civic duty to their country. In fact, the idea that corruption takes place when people seek their own private gains instead of the common good was the very basis of civic humanism, according to which “it was only by a relentless pursuit of civic virtues that a man could serve the commonwealth and become a truly noble citizen” (Peltonen 1995: 11). Therefore, promoters of the Spanish Match are depicted as enemies of the country, opportunistic people who only care about their own good at the expense of the nation's health.¹² Thus, by means of his attack on recusants and courtiers,¹³ the pamphleteer

¹² This accusation is recurrent in many contemporary anti-Match works, both by Scott and others. See, for instance, Scott's *The Belgicke Pismire* (1622: 12, 26-28, 44, 82-83) and *The High-Waies of God* (1623: 59); Barnes (1624: 36, 43, 45); Sutton (1623: 9-10, 13-14, 39-40); Wither (1621: B1r-v, D5r-v).

¹³ Attacks on the court as a place of corruption were common in early seventeenth-century English political discourse. According to Marku Peltonen, such criticism was based on the history of imperial Rome and authors denouncing these attitudes usually made extensive use of Seneca and Tacitus to expose such vices as hypocrisy, flattery and dissimulation at the English court (1995: 128).

indirectly points to the need for true English citizens to take an active role against James's foreign policy.

Indeed, Scott's description of the hatred and malice of English recusants (B2v)¹⁴ stresses their treacherous behaviour and implies a clear criticism of James's irenic measures which distinguished between loyal and disloyal Catholics. In Scott's opinion, only Protestantism can be truly English whereas the evil nature of Catholics proves they are unable to reform or show any obedience to the legitimate monarch. Any conciliatory action towards recusants is doomed to failure; any concessions made to them in the context of a dynastic alliance –as was the case– could only endanger the *status quo*. Consequently, the apparent Catholic revival in London alluded to by Gondomar may have upset many Protestant readers:

[English Jesuits] may worke them [English people] to our ends, as Masters their servants, Tutors their schollers, fathers their children, Kings their subiects. And that they may doe this the more boldly and securely, I haue somewhat dasht the authoritie of their high commission [...] I haue caused the execution of their office to be slackened, that so an open way may be given to our spirituall instruments for the free exercise of their faculties [...] And if they should be sent to prison, even that place (of the most part) is made as a Sanctuary for them [...] so they liue safe in prison till we haue time to worke their libertie and assure their liues. And in the meane time their place of restraint is a study unto them, where they haue opportunitie to confer together as in a Colledge, and to arme themselues in unity against the single adversary abroad. (C4r-v)

However, according to Luis Tobíos, the situation of English Catholics was a secondary problem for the ambassador, whose main concern remained Spain's political alliance with England. In fact, Philip III had warned him against urging protection of Catholics, since this could provoke James's suspicions. Catholic interference in Gondomar's work was sometimes a motive of annoyance for the ambassador. Despite his involvement with the English Catholic cause, his relationship with his coreligionists was far from ideal (25-32).

¹⁴ For instance, they are accused of promoting enmity between England and the Low Countries and collecting money to develop their organization and weaken the State, as well as directly conspiring against the monarch's person in the Gunpowder Plot. Some reference to Father Baldwin, allegedly involved in the conspiracy and freed from prison before Gondomar departed in 1618, is thus unavoidable (C4r).

In addition, Scott blames the diplomat's faction at court for James's conflicts with the English Parliament, here described as the only guarantor of England's integrity and preserver of the Common Law. Through the attack on his parasites, James is indirectly criticised for his lack of respect for English liberties and his rejection of a more civic and interactive mode of government since the sovereign was seen to require counsel in the promotion of the commonwealth.

Religious indifference and general inertia after a twenty year peace are equally criticized as pernicious to the nation's welfare. Scott reveals again his humanist views on government by alluding, indirectly, to the old Roman ideal of the good noble citizen raising arms, according to which war was the principal means of achieving civic greatness.¹⁵ The generation of Englishmen who had fought against the Armada is presented as a model to follow, while nostalgia for the age of Elizabeth prompts Scott's censure of James's navy: "Their bodies by long disuse of armes were disabled and their mindes effeminated by peace and luxury, far from that they were in 88. when they were dayly flesht in our blood and made hearty by customary conquests" (B2v).¹⁶ Accordingly, Gondomar's insistence on the need to punish English attacks on the Spanish navy explains Scott's denunciation of the king's disregard for colonial and commercial investments.¹⁷ Memories of Elizabeth's promotion of English naval interests highlight the Stuart monarch's disregard for the imperial ideal of former times: "There by I [Gondomar] and their ovvne wants together haue kept them from furnishing their Navy,

¹⁵ For an analysis of the concept of civic greatness and the Roman idea of the noble citizen, see Peltonen (1995: 236, 253).

¹⁶ See other similar examples in Scott's *The Belgick Souldier* (28-29, 31, 36-37, 39); *The Proiecter* (1); Reynolds (1624: 31, 34-36); and Leighton (1624: 7-8, 42).

¹⁷ King James's opinion of merchants differed greatly from Scott's: "The Merchants think the whole common-wele ordained for making them up; and accounting it their lawfull gaine and trade, to enrich themselues vpon the losse of all the rest of the people, they transport from vs things necessarie; bringing backe sometimes unnecessary things, and other times nothing at all. They buy for vs the worst wares, and sell them at the dearest price: and albeit the victuals fall or rise of their prices, according to the aboundance or skantnesse thereof; yet the prices of their wares euer rise, but neuer fall: being as constant in that their euill custome, as if it were a settled Law for them. They are also the speciall cause of the corruption of the coyne, transporting all our owne, and bringing in forraine, vpon what price they please to set on it." See *Basilicon Doron* (Edinburgh, 1598) in Sommerville (1994: 29-30).

which being the wal of their Island, & once the strongest in Christendome lies now at roade unarmed & fit for ruine" (B4r). Thus, the ambassador's celebration of the execution of the Elizabethan hero, Sir Walter Raleigh (C1r), exemplifies what the author considered a mistaken notion of international policy,¹⁸ and one which could only bring about England's general and dangerous impoverishment:

Thus stands the state of that poore miserable countrie [England], which had never more people and fewer men. So that if my master should resolve upon an invasion, the time never fits as at this present, securitie of this marriage and the disuse of armes having cast them into a dead sleepe, a strong and wakening faction being ever amongst them ready to assist us, and they being unprovided of shippes and armes, or hearts to fight, and universall discontentment filling all men. (C1v)

Contemporary dissent in Protestant ranks are held responsible for England's weakness, although divisions among Catholics are also referred to in an attempt to demystify their power and offer some hope of victory over the enemy (C1r-C2r). Spain's stratagems are also emphasized to explain the opposition between the Scottish clergy and the nobility, and so James's passivity is implicitly criticized for their lack of union. However, the potential ambiguities of the text are silenced and rebellious attitudes are discouraged, as they would favour Spanish interests. Hence, the notion of foreignness is associated with sedition, and detached from any true Protestant commitment to the nation's good, as the character of Gondomar explains:

He [King James] I say seekes to worke both Churches to uniformitie, and to this end made a jorney into Scotland, but with no such successe as he expected, for diuers of ours attended the traine, who stirred up humors and factions, and cast in scruples and doubts to hinder & crosse the proceedings; *yea those that seeme most aduerse to us and aduerse from our opinions, by their disobedience and example helpe forward our plots, and these are incouraged by a factious and heady multitude, by a faint and irresolute clergie, (many false brethrē being amōgst their Bps) & by the prodigal Nobilitie who maintained these stirs in the Church, that thereby they may safely keepe their Church liuings*

¹⁸ England's detachment from the Netherlands is also explained as erroneous since it constitutes a lost opportunity to weaken Spain and satisfy English commercial interests (B4v).

in their hands, which they haue most sacrilegiously seased upon in the time of the first deformatiō, & which they feare would be recouered by the Clergy if they could be brought to brotherly peace & agreement; for they haue seene the King very bountiful in this kind, *hauing lately increased their pensiōs and settled the clergy a cōpetēt maintenance, & besides out of his owne meanes, which in the kingdome is not of the greatest, hauing brought in and restored whole Bishopriks to the Church, which were before in lay-mens hands, a great part of the Nobilities estates consisting of spirituall lands, which makes them cherish the puritanicall faction, who will be content to be trencher-fed with scraps and crummes,* and contributions and arbitrary beneuolences from their Lords and Lairds and Ladies, and their adherents and followers. (C2r-v; my emphasis)

References to the corruption of the nobility and the bishops and the fact that the “puritanicall faction” are now depicted as victims articulate Scott’s attack on both political and ecclesiastic hierarchies, which are described as contrary to Protestantism. In contrast, the term “Puritan” is re-evaluated as a synonym of the true Protestant, in no way dangerous to the *status quo*. Despite Scott’s attempts generally to assume a moderate position in his pamphlet, his Presbyterian sympathies are sometimes alluded to and presented as an ideal to adopt.

The submissive attitude of a significant part of the English clergy, described as dishonest and cowardly, is presented as negative, in contrast with the honest preachers persecuted for counselling their monarch against the Match. But their notion of civic duty, far from being rewarded, is punished by the king, thus making them into spiritual heroes courageous enough to challenge Gondomar’s manoeuvres:

The truth is my Lord (quoth the Ambassadour), that privately what they can, and publiquely what they dare, both in England & Scotland, all for the most part (except such as are of our faith) oppose this match to their utmost, by prayers, counsels, speeches, wishes; but if any be found longer tongued then his fellows, we haue still meanes to charme their sawcinesse, to silence them, and expell them the Court, to disgrace them and crosse their preferments, with the imputation pragmaticke Puritanisme. (C3r)

Scott identifies himself with these Protestant preachers and indirectly appropriates their alleged virtues, protecting his work against any possible accusation of disobedience or malice. His reference to a general dissatisfaction with the Match project allows

the pamphleteer to present himself as a spokesman for Protestant England.

Finally, Gondomar's triumphal account is interrupted by the sudden arrival of letters informing him of the recent apprehension of Barnavelt¹⁹ and the subsequent discovery of Spanish plans. Scott describes Spain's amazement at their defeat and presents it as a prelude to further Protestant victories. The biblical quotation from Daniel 4 at the end of the pamphlet distances the readers from the previous fictional report, and works as a moral through which they should read the previous account: "In the meane tyme, Let not those be secure, whom it concernes to be rowsed up, knowing that this aspiring Nebuchadnezar wil not loose the glorie of his greatness, (who continueth still to magnifie himselfe in his great Babel) until it be spoken, thy kingdome is departed from thee" (D2r).²⁰ The quotation serves as a direct warning to the Spanish king, whose fall is prophesied using the analogy of Nebuchadnezzar's wickedness and pride.²¹ As W. Sibley Towner explains, the *Book of Daniel* "teaches that the God of justice and righteousness is not mocked by the powers of oppression that hold sway in the world. God will emerge from history as a victor, and those who choose to serve the causes of justice and righteousness are on the victor's side" (Towner

¹⁹ Oldenbarnaveldt was a prominent Dutch politician executed in The Hague on 13 May 1619, at the age of seventy-two, after being convicted of treason. He had been accused of conspiring with Spain in the Netherlands, though he maintained his innocence to the end. His case was of great interest in England. John Fletcher and Philip Massinger wrote a play on the subject, *The Tragedy of Sir John van Olden Barnavelt*, performed three months after his execution.

²⁰ These lines conclude Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as it appears in the King James Bible: "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity" (Daniel 4. 24-27).

²¹ For anti-Catholic English writers, Nebuchadnezzar's imperialistic ambitions and invasion of Jerusalem worked as a perfect parallel for the Spanish monarch's intention to attain Universal Monarchy.

1993). So, Scott encourages his readers to support God's cause against the Spanish enemy and implicitly warns them of divine punishment for those who remain indifferent. The pamphleteer chooses the Bible in order to express his message but hides his own voice to protect himself from censure. The author's conclusion is thus covered under the appearance of a divine commandment.

To sum up, Scott's attack on Spain did not serve as a goal in itself, but encouraged further reflections on the interaction between the king and his subjects, and Englishmen's direct involvement in foreign and domestic affairs. His anti-Catholicism and prejudices about the Match and the Spanish faction at court allow for an implicit defence of Classical humanist values as the only means of saving the country from ruin. The popularity of *Vox Populi* suggests that his words did not fall on deaf ears and that there were already a number of Englishmen who welcomed the ideas he proposed. His more than probable collaboration with the "patriot" faction at court and his connections with leading figures in the Church of England and Bohemia may also imply that Scott was just another part of a complex political web of people who hoped to gain favour from the English Parliament and support from the populace against James's policy. The choice of the pamphlet format, together with a direct, dramatic and highly visual language, underlines his –and his benefactors'– interest in reaching a large popular audience. Thus, the controversy over *Vox Populi* was not only the result of Scott's critical view of royal policy, but of his ability to appeal to a wide and varied readership that was more politically involved, and therefore, more potentially threatening, than ever.

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L. Álvarez Recio

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L. Álvarez Recio

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